



TOWN OF RICHMOND
RICHMOND TOWN CENTER
 203 Bridge Street, P.O. Box 285
 Richmond, Vermont 05477



Planning Commission Reporting Form for Municipal Bylaw Amendments
April 1, 2024

Residential Uses in the Industrial/Commercial Zoning District and PUD Revisions

This report is in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §4441 (c) which states:

When considering an amendment to a bylaw, the planning commission shall prepare and approve a written report on the proposal. A single report may be prepared so as to satisfy the requirements of this subsection concerning bylaw amendments and subsection 4384 (c) of this title concerning plan amendments...The report shall provide:

(A) Brief explanation of the proposed amendment and... include a statement of purpose as required for notice under §4444 of this title:

This report proposes to amend the Richmond Zoning Regulations, Section 3.7, Industrial Commercial District; Section 5.12, Planned Unit Development and Residential PUD; and Section 7, Definitions. The purpose is to align and clarify the language of the PUD section, 5.12, with that of the Industrial/Commercial Zoning District, Section 3.7, regarding residential uses as part of a PUD or Residential PUD.

The amendments propose that Residential PUDs be allowed only on lots already hosting residences in the Industrial/Commercial District, and that PUD's or Residential PUD's may include subdivision of the lot. The Industrial/Commercial District will retain its primary emphasis on non-residential development and the retention of land for future commercial purposes, while allowing needed additional housing on lots that, prior to the adoption of zoning, had developed residential uses and have remained so into the current period.

Further, the amendment also seeks to remove the Master Development Plan Requirement from the Zoning Regulations with "Critical Permit Conditions" language, adjust Section 5.12 to accommodate this change and reorganize the remaining existing material in Section 5.12 for greater clarity and consistency.

And shall include findings regarding how the proposal:

1. Conforms with or furthers the goals and policies contained in the municipal plan, including the effect of the proposal on the availability of safe and affordable housing:

The proposed amendments conform to and further the goals of the Richmond Town Plan. In the Future Land Use Section, the Northwest Industrial/Commercial areas lists

“secondary multi-family or other residential or mixed uses” as a future use, as well as “a mix of commercial and industrial uses.” In the Housing section, Goal 1, Action 1 states “When updating zoning regulations, identify opportunities for development of a variety of housing types, for example **allowing mixed residential and commercial use**, higher unit density, or unique accessory housing in certain areas that will be identified during said update.” In the Economic Development section, Goal 1, Action 9 states “Adjust land use regulations to allow for and encourage new industrial/commercial and **mixed-use** development ...”

Furthermore, these amendments reflect a growing concern with the shortage of housing in Chittenden County and beyond. They remove regulatory barriers to housing creation in pockets that have been identified as being suitable for this use, without abandoning a commitment to preserving some commercial space. The new housing that will be created will be safely located adjacent to existing housing and will contribute to building a neighborhood. Opportunities for commercial enterprises will be maintained, and maximum flexibility will be preserved for a commercial landscape where live/work strategies are becoming more common, and the lines between commercial and residential uses may be blurred. There are no true “industrial” uses currently in this district, nor is it suitable for these uses, as the existing commercial enterprises are bordered on one side by a large neighborhood of mobile homes, and on the other side by single-family residences.

The revisions to the language of the PUD process facilitate the changes described above that allow residential uses in the Industrial/Commercial District, and, in addition, attempt to resolve longstanding issues with the Master Development Plan concept.

2. Carries out, as applicable, any specific proposals for any planned community facilities:

These proposed zoning amendments do not carry out any specific proposals for planned community facilities and will not impact any plans for community facilities.